

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

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TAGS: PINS, PINT, HO

SUBJECT: NEW PRESS GUIDANCE ON U.S. RELATIONS WITH
HONDURAS

REF: STATE 202363

1. THE FOLLOWING NEW PRESS GUIDANCE IS BEING MADE AVAIL-
ABLE FOR THE AUGUST 11 NOON BRIEFING ON AN ,IF ASKED"
BASIS.

2. QUOTE:

Q. HAS THE US RECOGNIZED THE NEW MILITARY JUNTA IN HONDURAS?

A. WE ARE CONTINUING NORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE
GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS. THEREFORE, THE QUESTION OF RE-
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COGNITION DOES NOT ARISE, NOR IS APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL
OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IMPLIED. WE HAVE NOTED THE PUBLICLY
STATED PLEDGE THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL MAINTAIN THE
SCHEDULE FOR ELECTION IN 1980 OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY,
RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, INTERNATIONAL
TREATIES AND CONVENTIONS, AND CONTINUE MEDIATION OF THE
DISPUTE WITH EL SALVADOR. WE WELCOME THESE STATEMENTS AND

WILL FOLLOW THESE EVENTS CLOSELY, HOPING TO BE ABLE TO
CONTINUE GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH HONDURAS WITHIN
THIS CONTEXT.

Q. YOU MEAN TO SAY, THEN, IT WASN'T A COUP?

A. THE CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP IN HONDURAS IS NOT CONSIDERED
TO BE A CHANGE IN THE GOVERNING INSTITUTION OF THAT
COUNTRY. THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES, WHICH
EXERCISES AUTHORITY IN HONDURAS, NAMED GENERAL JUAN
ALBERTO MELGAR AS CHIEF OF STATE IN 1975. THIS COUNCIL
REQUESTED HIS RESIGNATION ON AUGUST 7 AND, AS IS KNOWN,
NAMED IN HIS PLACE A THREE-MAN MILITARY JUNTA.

Q. HAVE WE INFORMED THE HONDURANS IN A NOTE, AS WAS DONE
WITH THE BOLIVIANS, THAT RELATIONS WILL CONTINUE? WHEN?

A. NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS ARE CONTINUING. NO NOTES
ON THIS MATTER HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED.

Q. WHAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS HAVE RECOGNIZED, OR CONTINUED
RELATIONS WITH, THE NEW JUNTA?

A. I DON'T HAVE A DEFINITE LIST. ALL THAT WE HAVE TALKED
TO.
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Q. HAS THE JUNTA MADE KNOWN ITS BASIC POLICIES?

A. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT SEVEN OF THE THIRTEEN
MINISTERS FROM GENERAL MELGAR'S CABINET HAVE BEEN RETAINED
IN OFFICE BY THE JUNTA, PLUS TWO SUB-MINISTERS WHO
WERE ELEVATED TO THE RANK OF MINISTER. THIS APPEARS TO
INDICATE THAT THE BASIC POLICIES AND PROGRAMS OF THE
PREVIOUS HONDURAN ADMINISTRATION WILL BE CONTINUED BY THE
JUNTA.

Q. IS OUR EMBASSY IN HONDURAS CONTINUING NORMAL RELATIONS
WITH THAT GOVERNMENT?

A. YES.

Q. HAS THERE BEEN ANY VIOLENCE IN CONNECTION WITH GENERAL
MELGAR'S OUSTER?

A. NONE OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE.

Q. HAS GENERAL MELGAR BEEN ARRESTED OR EXILED?

A. WE UNDERSTAND HE IS AT HOME IN HONDURAS AND NOT UNDER ARREST.

Q. THERE HAVE BEEN PRESS REPORTS THAT THE REASON GENERAL MELGAR WAS OUSTED WAS THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING. IS THAT TRUE?

A. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY INFORMATION INDICATING THAT GENERAL MELGAR WAS IN ANY WAY PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING. THERE HAVE BEEN PUBLIC ALLEGATIONS OF SUCH INVOLVEMENT ON THE PART OF A FEW HONDURAN MILITARY PERSONNEL. THOSE ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN DISCIPLINED.
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Q. WHAT, THEN, WAS THE REASON FOR MELGAR'S OUSTER?

A. THAT QUESTION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS. END QUOTE. VANCE

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